



Post operative care for knee arthroscopy

When you get home take it easy. Find a comfortable chair, couch or bed, put your leg up and relax. Get up to go to the bathroom or just briefly to get something to eat. Eat lightly at first and advance your diet as tolerated. If you feel nauseated, it could be from some of the medicines received at the hospital or from your pain medication prescription. If you had a spinal anesthetic, you may develop a bit of a headache. Drink fluids, lie down flat and if it persists call 248-898-5000 and ask for the anesthesiologist on call who will give you further instructions.

There will be a dressing on your leg. If you notice some blood staining the night of the surgery or that next day, do not be alarmed. Sometimes the cuts may ooze for a short time after surgery. If you see blood actually dripping, please call my office for instructions. You may be instructed to go to the Emergency Center at Beaumont Hospital for examination. If you notice some numbness or tingling in your foot, this may be from a tourniquet which is sometimes used at surgery. This is temporary and usually resolves in a day or so.

You may remove the dressing 48 hours after surgery. At that time, you may get into a shower and get the leg wet. **Do not** immerse the leg in a bath, pool, jacuzzi or lake water. **Do not** do anything to the wounds themselves. **Do not** put any ointments, creams etc. on them. Simply allow water to hit the leg. Soap the rest of your body, pat the leg dry with a clean towel, and put band-aids over the cuts. If you have an incision, then use some gauze pads from the drugstore and change the dressing daily. Hold it on with the ace wrap. Keep this dressed until seen in the office.

Call the office for a post op appointment which will usually be around 10-14 days after surgery.

You have been given a prescription for pain medication. Take it as directed. If you only have mild pain, you may try taking Tylenol, Advil or even an aspirin to avoid some of the side effects of prescription pain medicines such as nausea, constipation or drowsiness. Be aware that pain medicines are only supposed to last about 3-4 hours. Don't be alarmed if after a few hours you need to take some more. *Do not drive if you have taken any prescription pain medication!!*

Generally, don't plan a very ambitious schedule for yourself in the few days after surgery. If you are too active too early, then your knee will swell and become more painful. This may prolong your recovery. Drive only when you feel that you can safely operate the controls of the vehicle. You may return to work or school when you feel able. The exact amount of time off will depend upon the amount of pain and swelling you have and the kind of work that you do.

During the first 2 days after surgery, it is often helpful to use cold on your knee. Ice cubes, re-usable cold packs or a bag of frozen vegetables all work well. Place them over something like a washcloth or pillow case, leave on for 15-20 minutes then off for an hour. You can repeat this as often as needed. **Do not put anything frozen directly on your skin. You may get FROSTBITE!!**

Although knee arthroscopy is pretty safe, problems do occasionally arise. If you develop any of the following signs or symptoms please call my office. Go directly to Beaumont Hospital Emergency Center in Royal Oak if the symptoms are particularly severe!

- Temperature greater than 101° F as measured by thermometer, along with redness around the cuts and increasing pain around the knee that does not respond to pain medication
- Swelling in your lower leg and calf muscles with tenderness when you gently squeeze the calf
- Shortness of breath and pain on deep breathing

SPECIFIC POST-OP INSTRUCTIONS

(to be followed in addition to preceding general information)

Weight Bearing

- Non-weight bearing: no pressure is applied to leg, crutches must be used
- Toe-touch: think about an egg below your toes as you set down your foot, apply light pressure to the leg (don't break the egg) using crutches to walk
- Protected weight bearing: try to walk normal applying the majority of your body weight to the crutches
- Full weight bearing as tolerated: progress off crutches as tolerated by pain

Brace

- Immobilized: leg in extension in locked brace to prevent motion; brace may be removed for ice application and showering only
- Drop-lock hinge: when walking, the brace should be locked straight (it will be set like that in the hospital). While sitting, brace may be unlocked by locating the locking mechanisms on either side of the knee and pulling them toward you.
Remember before getting up, the brace must be locked in the straight position
- Range of motion: the amount of flexion (bending) will be set by the hospital staff at the time of surgery.

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